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New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support: causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Progress report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report addresses progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318). The recommendations in that report relating specifically to addressing economic and social factors underlying the promotion of sustainable development are covered in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/63/206) which should be read together with the present report.

The report provides a brief overview of major peace and security developments in Africa during the past year, underlining the serious concerns being addressed by Africa and the international community in order to restore and maintain peace and rebuild post-conflict countries. The report also reviews progress in relation to the additional short-term steps and actions proposed in the previous report to support efforts towards a conflict-free Africa pending a comprehensive and substantive strategic review of the impact of new challenges and threats to long-term peace and sustainable development.

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The report concludes that despite a decade of achievements and challenges, the international community must press forward with increased dedication, together with African regional organizations, to assure lasting peace and development in the face of growing global challenges.

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I. Introduction

1. On 25 September 1997, the Security Council convened a meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs to consider the need for concerted international effort to promote peace and security in Africa. In the presidential statement issued on that day (S/PRST/1997/46) the Council observed that, despite the progress achieved by some African States, the number and intensity of armed conflicts on the continent remained a matter of grave concern requiring a determined response.

2. In reply to the request of the Security Council, a comprehensive analysis was undertaken in 1998 and a report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa was submitted to the General Assembly and to the Council (A/52/871-S/1998/318). The report contained a number of recommendations both on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace as well as on sustainable development in Africa. The present report is the annual follow-up report on the implementation of those recommendations. The recommendations relating specifically to addressing the economic and social factors underlying the promotion of sustainable development are covered in the companion report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/63/206) which should be read in conjunction with the present report.

3. In the past decade, a number of armed conflicts and civil wars in Africa have ended and there have been significant advances in the area of governance. The newly established United Nations Peacebuilding Commission has provided support for several African countries emerging from conflict while the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union is providing an innovative approach to improving governance. It is evident, however, that the basic conditions for sustained peace and development have yet to be consolidated throughout the continent, as reflected in the slow progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

4. The challenges of extreme poverty, weak State institutions, poor management of natural resources, failure to protect fundamental human rights and growing challenges related to climate change and steeply rising food and fuel prices remain.

5. The present report provides an overview of the efforts made over the past year by the international community, in support of African countries, to maintain and restore peace and to rebuild post-conflict countries. The report also reviews progress made on the specific actions and steps recommended in the previous report on this subject (A/62/204), pending the more comprehensive review and strategic plan that is needed not only to reflect the progress made over the past 10 years but also to take into account new challenges and threats to Africa's long-term peace and sustainable development.

II. Actions taken by the international community to respond to situations of conflict

6. The international community is increasingly paying attention to situations of conflict and conflict prevention in Africa. The Security Council devotes more than 60 per cent of its time to peace and security in the continent. Moreover, the Council is paying more and more attention to issues relating to armed conflict, including

sexual violence against women in armed conflict, children in armed conflict and the role of regional organizations such as the African Union in addressing armed conflict.

A. Prevention and mediation

7. In recognition of the benefits of conflict prevention in both human and financial terms, I have proposed a major strengthening of capacity to ensure that the United Nations has the tools it needs to carry out the vital function of proactive engagement in preventive diplomacy. Advisory and diplomatic efforts have been enhanced by the timely assistance provided by the newly established Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs to United Nations envoys working in Northern Uganda, Darfur and Western Sahara, Somalia, Kenya, West Africa, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

8. In addition, in March 2008, an on-call mediation team consisting of peace negotiation experts in security, transitional justice and human rights, constitution-making, wealth-sharing and power-sharing arrangements was created. The team will be available to assist in negotiations in the context of United Nations political, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in the field. My proposals aim to further strengthen preventive diplomacy capacity by facilitating a more direct, systematic and knowledgeable engagement of political affairs staff with regional organizations and other partners in the field.

9. The African Union has also acted to significantly increase its mediation capacity, including through the establishment of the Panel of the Wise in December 2007. A specifically constituted Panel of Eminent Persons was called upon during early 2008 to help mediate the post-election political crisis in Kenya. The cooperation between the African Union and United Nations during the Kenyan crisis is an example of the growing collaboration between and effectiveness of the two organizations in conflict prevention.

10. Another indication of deepening cooperation between various international, continental and regional actors was demonstrated over the past year when the African Union, together with the United Nations, representatives of the Facilitation, the Regional Peace Initiative, the European Union and Ambassadors of South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, took coordinated steps to end the stalemate in the Burundi peace process. The strength of regional facilitators, working in synergy with other stakeholders, contributed significantly to halting the resumption of hostilities in Burundi during the year.

11. During the year the Security Council sent a mission team to Africa, which was intended to have a strong positive impact on the region's peace processes, stability and humanitarian conditions. The mission visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire in June 2008 to help with efforts to promote peace and reconciliation.

12. I urge the international community to support the development of additional tools and strategies for preventing conflict, including coordinating early warning information and devising protocols for activating early action mechanisms. Early response and action strategies must carefully avoid external intervention in national matters of duly constituted sovereign States. In many cases, discreet regional and

continental mediations can be employed to good effect and should be strengthened in the next phase of the African Union-United Nations 10-year capacity-building programme.

B. Peacekeeping

1. Western Sahara

13. My Personal Envoy held consultations with the representatives of the Government of Morocco and the Frente Polisario in January 2008 and again in March. Progress continues to be made on mine clearance and enhanced confidence-building measures that may allow family visits to take place both by land and air. Notwithstanding the parties' reiteration of their commitments to show political will and negotiate in good faith, there has been little progress on the resolution of political differences which hamper economic development in the region and which continue to take a deep human toll especially on those who have lived in isolation and poverty in the camps for decades.

2. Côte d'Ivoire

14. Troops from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) continue to conduct patrols throughout the country to monitor the security situation and along the borders with Guinea and Liberia in order to prevent cross-border movements of weapons and armed groups. During the year, the overall risk of a resumption of hostilities diminished, largely owing to the favourable political atmosphere engendered by the signing of the Ouagadougou Peace Accord on 4 March 2007, which is a positive example of African solutions to African problems. The African Union, which actively supported the Accord, subsequently urged parties to speed up implementation of the agreement in order to pave the way for holding the long delayed presidential elections, which are now scheduled to take place in November 2008.

3. Ethiopia and Eritrea

15. The tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which are most clearly manifested over the demarcation of the parties' common border, intensified during the year. On 22 April 2008, the Security Council reiterated that Ethiopia and Eritrea are primarily responsible for settling their border dispute and noted that the United Nations was reaching the end of what peacekeeping can achieve in the present situation since peacekeeping can only make a difference when countries honour their political commitments. On 30 July 2008 the Security Council voted unanimously to end the 8-year mandate of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE), noting that the Mission had "become impossible to execute" given restrictions to movements of peacekeepers and failure to accept the rulings of the independent boundary commission.

4. Liberia

16. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) supported Government efforts to collect and destroy weapons and ammunition voluntarily surrendered or discovered through search operations. While the overall security situation in Liberia remained generally stable, continuing criminal activities led to an increase in the

number of mobile and foot patrols in high crime areas. UNMIL also assisted the national Government with the development of a national strategy and operational plan to address this problem.

17. The country has come a long way towards establishing the foundation for sustainable peace. The former President, Charles Taylor, is under indictment at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. On 4 October 2007, Liberia was declared eligible to receive funding from the Peacebuilding Fund in order to help consolidate the hard-won peace by enabling concrete, rapid action. The subsequent priority plan approved under the Peacebuilding Fund addressed the following areas: fostering national reconciliation and conflict management, interventions for promoting peace and resolving conflict and strengthening State capacity for peace consolidation.

5. Democratic Republic of the Congo

18. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made good progress in its post-conflict reconstruction efforts following the historic and largely peaceful elections held in 2006. In June 2007, the Government, with the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, co-hosted the Second International Conference on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Stability in Africa, which brought together over 200 practitioners and experts from 19 African countries and focused on critical aspects of programmes in this field, including security sector reform and transitional justice. The forum provided an opportunity for African stakeholders working in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to share experiences and strategize for the future.

19. In November 2007, representatives the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda met in Nairobi and issued a joint communiqué calling for action to eliminate the threat of illegal armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the threat posed by the ex-Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) Interahamwe, which constitute a threat to both countries and to the surrounding region. The two countries also pledged to refrain from arming, financing or otherwise supporting any armed groups.

20. The Goma conference on peace, security and development in the Kivus was held in January 2008 with the active engagement of and support from the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the African Union and international partners. On 23 January 2008, all participating Congolese armed groups signed an act of commitment pledging to entirely and immediately cease hostilities throughout the Northern and Southern Kivu provinces.

21. Despite these agreements, serious violence, particularly against women and children, continued in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the first half of 2008. While many challenges of governance and institutional build-up remain, it is important to acknowledge the overall progress that has been made in the past few years.

6. Darfur region in the Sudan

22. A joint African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was authorized in support of the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement signed on 5 May 2006, by the Sudanese Government and the largest rebel group, the

Sudan Liberation Movement. Deployment of UNAMID personnel and equipment has taken place only gradually during the first half of 2008.

23. On 30 June 2008, the Chairperson of the African Union and the Secretary-General appointed a new joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator for Darfur. Nevertheless, throughout July the security situation across Darfur worsened, including attacks on a UNAMID patrol that resulted in the deaths of seven peacekeepers and injuries to more than 20 others.

7. Chad and the Central African Republic

24. During the year, lengthy negotiations with the Government of Chad led to agreement on a three-pronged approach to improving the security situation. Specifically, the Government of Chad agreed on a multidimensional presence that would entail a United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) to provide security and protection of civilians and to contribute to the monitoring, promotion and protection of human rights. The Government also agreed to the establishment of a Chadian police force to maintain law and order in refugee camps and authorized a European force to protect civilians and United Nations personnel and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. By June 2008, nearly 600 United Nations personnel and some 3,000 European Union Force (EUFOR) personnel had been deployed.

25. Numerous armed border engagements occurred in January 2008 and rebel forces attacked the capital of Chad in early February 2008. The African Union Peace and Security Council condemned the unconstitutional attempt to take power in Chad and mandated the Presidents of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and of the Congo to seek a solution to the crisis in consultation with the Chadian parties. Moreover, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) convened an extraordinary summit on the situation in March 2008 and pledged to provide emergency assistance to Chad.

26. Despite the peace efforts of the international community and of regional and subregional organizations, the Security Council mission that visited MINURCAT and a refugee camp in June 2008 found the situation dire and noted the severe threat of attack from armed groups.

27. The situation in Chad and the Central African Republic illustrates the complexity and seriousness of the challenges of peace and security facing parts of Africa. Greater political will from Governments in the region and from the international community, together with urgent provision of troops and logistical support for UNAMID and MINURCAT, will be critical to achieving human security and stability in this troubled region.

8. Somalia

28. In June 2008, the Transitional Federal Government and the opposition Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia assented, under the Djibouti Agreement, to end their conflict and called on the United Nations to deploy an international stabilization force to the country within 120 days. Subsequent attacks by other armed groups followed the agreement, however, and some groups and opposition members continue to be vehemently opposed to the pact.

29. As of July 2008, the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) consisted of one Burundian and two Ugandan battalions, totalling 2,650 troops out of an authorized 8,000 troops. On 16 July 2008, Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein appealed to the international community for a rapid deployment of United Nations peacekeepers in Somalia.

30. The Djibouti Agreement marks an important step towards achieving peace and stability for Somalia. Recent efforts have been undertaken by international partners, under the auspices of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), to establish a security sector framework. A start-up package of $14 million has been made available to help with immediate needs of the Transitional Federal Government.

C. Peacebuilding

31. In December 2005, in concurrent resolutions, the General Assembly and the Security Council established the peacebuilding architecture, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office to respond to the growing global demand for sustained support to countries emerging from conflict. The Peacebuilding Fund is expected to establish a crucial bridge between conflict and recovery in cases when other funding mechanisms may not yet be available.

32. With an initial funding target of $250 million, the Peacebuilding Fund focuses on stabilizing and strengthening Government institutions, thereby enhancing their capacity to sustain the peace process and to address their most immediate national needs as they emerge from conflicts. Support is provided to eligible countries through three different funding windows: (a) window I, countries before the Peacebuilding Commission; (b) window II, countries specifically designated by the Secretary-General; and (c) window III, emergency facilities managed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support for urgent and discrete peacebuilding activities.

33. Since 2006, four countries, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, have become eligible for funding under window I. In 2008, several other countries became eligible for funding under windows II and III, including the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Liberia and Kenya.

1. Burundi

34. An agreed Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi was promulgated in June 2007. The priority plan for peacebuilding developed by the Government of Burundi with the support of the United Nations served as the basis for an allocation of $35 million from the Peacebuilding Fund. The priority plan identified the following key areas: (a) good governance; (b) strengthening the rule of law within security forces; (c) strengthening justice, promotion of human rights, reconciliation and the fight against impunity; and (d) the land issue, particularly in the context of the reintegration of affected populations and community-based recovery aimed especially at women, youth and affected populations.[1]

[1] See S/2008/330.

35. Despite positive political trends over a number of years and the active involvement of the international community through the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union since the successful holding of elections in 2005, the overall political, security and humanitarian situation in Burundi remained difficult during the period under review.

2. Sierra Leone

36. The Government of Sierra Leone has made good progress in implementing its agenda for peace consolidation and economic recovery since the holding of legislative and presidential elections in 2007.

37. The United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), together with bilateral donors, continued to strengthen and train the police and armed forces. UNIOSIL also provided technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission for the local council elections that were successfully and peacefully held on 5 July 2008. These initiatives were financially supported by allocations from the Peacebuilding Fund. A United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office is expected to succeed UNIOSIL at the end of its mandate on 30 September 2008.

38. After the new Government of Sierra Leone signed the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework on 12 December 2007, additional projects were advanced in the areas of youth enterprise development and capacity development of the justice system and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. Further work in rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities is expected to be scaled up during 2008. Sustained efforts to tackle the causes of conflict are being made and if these efforts are kept on track, the prospects for durable peace and sustainable development should remain positive.

3. Guinea-Bissau

39. At the second session of the Peacebuilding Commission devoted to Guinea-Bissau in February 2008, it was noted that the country had made great strides since the conclusion of conflict in 1999. Nevertheless, mobilization of financial resources from the international community is essential in order for the country to continue along the path from post-conflict reconstruction to peace consolidation.

40. The Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau acknowledged the primary responsibility of his Government and the citizenry of the country to maintain their commitments to the necessary reforms that had already been initiated in relation to creating a climate of peace and reconciliation for holding elections, regularizing wage and salary payments, improving the fiscal health of the State, reforming the security and police sectors and addressing the narcotics trafficking problems.

41. The continued assistance of the Peacebuilding Commission is needed to stimulate donor assistance in order to continue long-term public administration and security sector reforms and to help provide training and create employment opportunities for youth and other vulnerable groups. The Peacebuilding Fund has sought funding of quick impact projects in the areas of health, energy and elections, including voter registration.

42. Other United Nations system agencies must also play a greater role in supporting peace consolidation, however, including through agriculture and

employment initiatives and by extending operational activities to fight the growing problem of international drug trafficking.

4. Central African Republic

43. The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (BONUCA) has assisted the Government of the Central African Republic in its efforts to consolidate democracy and national institutions since 2000. In January 2008, the Central African Republic became eligible to receive support through the Peacebuilding Fund, which has focused on three priority areas: security sector reform, promotion of good governance and the rule of law and revitalization of communities affected by conflicts.

III. Strengthening the response of the United Nations system to peace and security needs

44. In my previous report on this subject (A/62/204) I called for advancing the United Nations response in a number of areas to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa. Progress on these recommendations is reviewed in the sections below.

A. Support for African regional and subregional organizations

45. I have specifically called for deepening the engagement of the United Nations system in support of the African Union and subregional organizations as well as facilitating the short-term assignment of United Nations personnel in support of capacity-building.[2] While the elaboration of the African Union-United Nations 10-year capacity-building programme has advanced significantly, collaboration and cooperation have also evolved between the organizations of the United Nations system and their continental counterparts.

46. I am pleased to report that, in addition to the technical support, training, policy advice and assistance in mobilizing financial resources which the international community endeavours to provide, a number of United Nations agencies have also begun to provide direct staffing assistance in support of capacity-building of African regional and subregional organizations.

1. Enhanced capacity-building in support of the African Union

47. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the chair of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development sub-cluster of the Peace and Security cluster of the Regional Consultation Mechanism, has provided both policy and staffing support to the African Union. In this regard, UNHCR supported policy dissemination seminars for African civil society and a high-level workshop in cooperation with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) on the African Union's post-conflict reconstruction and development policy.

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[2] A/62/204, para. 74.

48. UNHCR also made available two staff members, together with information systems equipment, to support the African Union Commission's Division of Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons. UNHCR is providing the services of a consultant and one administrative support person for the preparation of the African Union Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which is to take place in November 2008.

49. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the African Union's Gender Division have entered into partnership to work on three areas: capacity-building for human rights programming, gender mainstreaming and monitoring within the African Union; strengthening women's human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations; and mobilizing women's effective participation through the African Union Economic and Social Council and the Pan-African Parliament. Since January 2008, a UNIFEM representative has been appointed to the African Union to work with on policy issues related to gender equality and women's rights.

50. The NEPAD Support Section of the Economic Commission for Africa created a NEPAD and Regional Integration Division to enhance United Nations system support to the African Union and its NEPAD programme. The Economic Commission for Africa participates actively in African Union summits and provides technical advice and inputs, particularly in the discussions on the integration of NEPAD into African Union structures and processes. The Regional Consultation Mechanism, established to enhance coordination in relation with the African Union's NEPAD programme, decided in November 2007 to move towards more comprehensive alignment with the priorities of the African Union Commission.

51. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and international partners, supported the African Union in its review and costing of its implementation plan of HIV and AIDS for 2007-2010. A joint financial agreement is being developed to support the plan. UNAIDS is also engaged in providing technical support for incorporating the issue of AIDS into the African Union peace and security architecture. In order to facilitate implementation of the African Union HIV and AIDS plan and to improve follow-up with regional economic communities, UNAIDS strengthened the African Union Commission for Social Affairs through the secondment of a senior staff member for two years and the provision of funds for recruiting another project officer.

52. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) assists the Education Department of the African Union Commission and the regional economic commissions through capacity-building. In this regard, UNESCO seconded a senior education specialist to the African Union to assist in managing the implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) Plan of Action.

53. In support of the African Union-United Nations 10-year capacity-building programme, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided institutional support to the Department of Social Affairs, Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, Department of Peace and Security and Directorate of Women, Gender and Development of the Commission of the African Union through secondment of staff at the substantive, administrative, financial and logistical levels.

Procurement of supplies and equipment was effected to enable smooth running of African Union and NEPAD bureaux. The approximate total cost of seconded staff, supplies and equipment and full time dedicated liaison staff amounted to $1 million as at end of March 2008. UNICEF expects to provide between $3 to $4 million to support the African Union in 2008.

54. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has continued to provide direct and indirect technical assistance to strengthen both the NEPAD secretariat and the African Union Commission, including provision of senior agricultural advisers, Junior Professional Officers and short-term consultants to help advance the agenda of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. FAO assisted by convening implementation-related meetings, supporting resource mobilization and supporting the regional economic communities.

55. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa of the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat continued to maintain active collaboration with the African Union Commission in the area of peace, security and disarmament. The Commission sought the views of the Regional Centre on matters relating to the establishment and functioning of the African Union Small Arms Unit and related disarmament matters. The Centre participated in three expert workshops organized by the African Union on the implementation of its border programme.

56. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations established the African Union Peacekeeping Support Team to ensure efficient and sustained assistance to the African Union in the area of peacekeeping. The team is a mechanism dedicated to providing assistance to the African Union in the preparation for and deployment of an African standby force and in building its long-term institutional capacity to plan, deploy and manage complex multidimensional peacekeeping operations.

57. The Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat continued to contribute to the strengthening of cooperation with the African Union and subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), ECCAS and the Economic and Monetary Community of West Africa (CEMAC) in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management, post-conflict peacebuilding and electoral assistance matters. The Department is developing a training programme on dialogue and mediation.

2. Cooperation with subregional organizations

58. The eighth meeting of the regional consultation mechanism, which coordinates United Nations system support to NEPAD and the Commission of the African Union, expanded its focus to include African subregional organizations within its purview. Several United Nations system agencies and departments reported during the year on their collaboration with subregional organizations. The Economic Commission of Africa's subregional offices have been working to bring United Nations agencies together in cooperative support of the African Union/NEPAD at the subregional level through engagement in multi-agency discussions.

59. In the past year the Regional Centre for Disarmament and Peace in Africa of the Office for Disarmament Affairs has continued its collaboration with ECOWAS on issues such as the establishment of a mechanism and measures to prevent illicit arms brokering activities in the subregion; the establishment of the subregional data

base and register on small arms and light weapons and peace operations; and the effective implementation of the ECOWAS moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa.

60. ECOWAS designated the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa as a resource institution for the elaboration of the standard operational procedures of the ECOWAS small arms programme. The Regional Centre is a member of the Regional Technical Committee of the Programme, which reviews and approves project proposals submitted by national commissions and other entities. The Centre participated in the first meeting of the Regional Technical Committee in Bamako in May 2007.

61. The Regional Centre also maintained cooperation with ECCAS, and the two institutions consulted intensively on the implementation of the São Tomé initiative, which called for the adoption of a legally binding instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons and the adoption of a code of conduct for defence and security forces in Central Africa.

62. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) collaborated with the African Union in organizing a meeting on intra-regional migration management at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. At the meeting, which was held from 12 to 14 May 2008 in Addis Ababa, experts from different United Nations agencies made a number of presentations.

63. UNICEF representatives in Eastern and Southern Africa scheduled a regional meeting in Addis Ababa from 5 to 9 May 2008 to discuss the evolving and changing developments in Africa, in particular the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union. The objective of the meeting was to share, learn and receive guidance on how best to programme regional activities.

64. A working group of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force for the Great Lakes region met during the year to map existing United Nations projects and programmes in support of the stability pact in the Great Lakes region and to identify gaps. United Nations country teams in the region prepared profiles for review by the Inter-Agency Task Force. The Executive Secretary of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region met with the Inter-Agency Task Force in June 2008 to discuss concrete measures for United Nations involvement in the implementation of the stability pact.

65. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/230, in which the Assembly recognized the importance of strengthening the capacity of African regional and subregional organizations to address the causes of conflict in Africa, the Secretary-General urged all Departments and agencies in a position to do so to expand direct staffing and related support to the African Union Commission and to subregional organizations in order to strengthen their efforts to establish and maintain conditions for lasting peace and security throughout the continent. Effective implementation of this important pact would make a significant contribution to the consolidation of peace in the Great Lakes region.

3. Cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council

66. In line with the recommendation in my report to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and

sustainable development in Africa (A/61/213), the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council held an historic meeting in New York in April 2008 to exchange views on issues of common concern and to establish closer and more structured cooperation. The two Councils reviewed conflict situations in the Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire. The meeting provided the opportunity for the two Councils to constructively share their different perspectives and seek ways to work in synergy with one another without duplication.

67. In its resolution 1809 (2008), the Security Council supported my proposal to set up within three months, an African Union-United Nations panel consisting of distinguished persons to consider the modalities for supporting peacekeeping operations which might be undertaken by regional organizations under a United Nations mandate. This is a critical step forward in addressing the need for conflict resolution actions in countries and in other situations which might arise.

B. Reducing the proliferation of small arms and ending the culture of violence

68. In the previous report of the Secretary-General, it was recommended that the United Nations fully exploit its strength in normative action to advance negotiations leading to a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. In addition, the United Nations system and other organizations were urged to take further steps to counter the culture of violence, which is both a result and cause of the large flows of arms by more fully "engaging and strengthening civil society in post-conflict countries utilizing, inter alia, broad-scale programmes in the culture of peace and civic education".[2]

69. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/89, the Secretary-General established a group of governmental experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive binding instrument to establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. The group of experts held its first and second sessions in February and May 2008 and completed its deliberations at its third and final session, held from 28 July to 8 August 2008. The deliberations of the experts were informed by the written views of Member States on the issue and by two analytical studies prepared by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). Based on the groups' deliberations and recommendations, a report will be produced for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

70. It should be noted that both ECOWAS and the Regional Centre on Small Arms, covering 12 countries in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa, reported during the period that concerted action had been taken at the regional level to prevent proliferation and cross-border flows of small arms and light weapons that threaten regional stability.

71. ECOWAS has agreed to a landmark Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, which was signed in June 2006. The Convention has already been ratified by five Member States (Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Burkina Faso) and will come into force upon the ninth ratification. Plans for implementation are being developed and resources for

training, equipment and institutional strengthening of judicial systems will be sought from the international community.

72. The Regional Centre on Small Arms is an intergovernmental organization working to implement the legally binding Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, which was signed by Member States on 21 June 2004. The Centre works in the areas of harmonization of legislation, capacity-building of law enforcement, regional coordination and public awareness.

73. The Centre's "culture of peace" activities include an annual anniversary celebration of the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (2006) which preceded the adoption of the Nairobi Protocol. The Centre organized a school essay contest in Uganda as a pilot project and prepared documentaries, drama presentations, and other communications and advocacy events to strengthen the culture of peace and to change attitudes and behaviours towards possession of small arms and light weapons.

74. In the framework of the ECOWAS peace and development programme and fund, a joint programme with UNESCO is being implemented under the theme of the "culture of peace". UNESCO is implementing a regional integration project entitled "Education for human rights, citizenship, peace and subregional integration in school curricula", the objective of which is to promote the development of curricula and training for trainers, teachers and communities and the production of teaching materials. The implementation of this regional project will benefit several countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo.

75. Also in West Africa, the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) reported strengthening culture of peace activities and promoting dialogue and participation through a variety of outreach activities as well as providing on-the-job training for media practitioners.

76. UNESCO has a mandate to report on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 (A/63/127). UNESCO has been working with its member States to revise textbooks and curricula to help ensure the removal of hate messages, distortions, prejudice and negative bias from textbooks and other educational media. UNESCO promotes the "From potential conflict to cooperation potential" initiative, which facilitates multi-level and interdisciplinary dialogues in order to foster peace, cooperation and development related to the critical area of managing the world's increasingly scarce shared water resources.

77. UNESCO has been working to instil democratic values in all students as an integrated component of its work to provide quality education at all educational levels, through formal and non-formal education. Democratic governance and citizenship participation in developing countries, particularly those in post-conflict situations, has been promoted through: the training of journalists and media professionals in non-partisan and independent reporting techniques in conflict areas; supporting the establishment of the necessary conditions for independent media by providing expertise to national authorities seeking to adapt their media legislation to

internationally recognized standards of freedom of expression, peace and tolerance; and assisting the media in covering elections.

C. Employment generation in post-conflict countries

78. In relation to another of the key recommendations from the previous report of the Secretary-General, the need "to establish a coordinated strategy for involving the United Nations system in the positioning of employment and income generation at the centre of early recovery and transition operations",[2] a working group led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) developed a comprehensive policy for post-conflict employment creation, income generation and reintegration. The policy, which was affirmed by the 19 cooperating agencies, established five guiding principles, including: the need for programmes to be coherent and comprehensive; to avoid harmful spill-over effects on individuals, communities, the environment and the economy ("do no harm"); to be conflict sensitive; to aim for sustainability; and to promote gender equality. A meeting was held by the working group in Cairo in March 2008 to develop operational guidelines for the implementation of the policy and preparations are being made for operational programmes to be developed at the country level.

79. The Peacebuilding Commission has actively supported employment generation in both Burundi and Sierra Leone as a key target for quick impact projects under the respective strategic frameworks. In the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi youth is recognized as a vulnerable sector of the population whose needs must be addressed within community recovery efforts, both in order to mitigate their vulnerability and to ensure their active and meaningful involvement in the peace consolidation process.

80. An allocation of $4 million was made from the Peacebuilding Fund to the Government of Burundi for "Youth participation in social cohesion at community level". The project covers six provinces and aims to empower young people and improve social cohesion in their communities through: (a) access to labour intensive activities (reforestation, environmental preservation, urban sanitation and rehabilitation of basic infrastructures); (b) access to micro-credit, vocational training and "first job" opportunities; and (c) peacebuilding and life skills training.

81. Youth employment and empowerment has also been one of the priority areas in the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement in Sierra Leone. The Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission, cites youth unemployment and marginalization as one of the root causes of the civil war that continues to represent a threat to peace consolidation.

82. The Government of Sierra Leone committed to implementing programmes for youth employment and empowerment, strengthening youth organizations and increasing youth participation in decision-making with particular attention to the needs of young women and girls. Over $3 million has been allocated from the Peacebuilding Fund to a youth employment empowerment project under the priority plan for Sierra Leone.

IV. Conclusion

83. Africa, supported by regional, subregional and international organizations, has made strong and sustained efforts over the past decade to promote peace, deepen commitment to democratic processes and good governance and address critical factors such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Elements of the African Union's peace and security architecture, such as the Peace and Security Council and the Panel of the Wise, have become operational and are showing concrete results both on their own and in conjunction with United Nations efforts.

84. Cooperative efforts in mediation, as in Kenya, and in peacekeeping, as in Darfur, are growing and United Nations agencies have improved collaboration with African regional and subregional organizations in advance of a detailed articulation of the next and broader phase of the African Union-United Nations 10-year capacity-building programme.

85. Furthermore, in support of the goal of African Heads of State of achieving a completely "conflict-free Africa" at the earliest possible time, United Nations agencies have begun to provide direct staff and, in some cases, logistical and financial support, to advance the work of the African Union in pursuit of that goal. In the present report, I draw particular attention to the critical work that an Inter-Agency Task Force has been doing to develop comprehensive operational guidelines for national efforts on post-conflict employment generation.

86. The Peacebuilding Commission is already playing a significant role and has also highlighted the critical aspect of youth unemployment in both Burundi and Sierra Leone, recognizing that the extremely large number of unemployed young people must be given new hope if they are to avoid being drawn back into and refuelling violent national and regional crises.

87. Despite the significant progress in improving governance which many African countries have made, largely through their own efforts, serious problems of exclusion, monopoly of power and extreme poverty remain at the heart of many of the continent's problems. Furthermore, post-electoral crises in some countries have given rise to growing concerns in the Security Council that some domestic issues have potential spill-over effects on the regional peace and security situation.

88. The progress made over the past years is not always well established, and it could be offset or reversed by new threats and the deepening of existing challenges. The expanding negative impacts of climate change and rising food and fuel prices threaten recent encouraging development gains. Without development, peace cannot be sustained. The reverse also holds true; without peace, there is little basis for development. I urge even greater commitment and collaboration by United Nations agencies and Member States to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding in support of Africa's own efforts to achieve a conflict-free continent and to build a shared prosperity for its people.